

River Oaks, Apt. N-26
850 N. Jefferson Street
Jackson, MS 39202
August 10, 1976

My dear friend Harold,

I write this, belatedly, and with apology for having been so long uncommunicative, and simply to send you a word of cheer and good will. You have been often in my thoughts and prayers, even if I have been negligent in expressing my unbroken friendship and admiration for you.

I am especially regretful, for I did recently have opportunity to call you locally. Between June 28 and July 1 I was the houseguest of a family who live in Damascus, Maryland. And during that time, having been informed that Frederick was a local ~~call~~, I had it foremost on my mind numerous times to give you a call. It was never possible, however, as I was only there in the late hours of the night and had to leave each morning at a very early hour. I was, with a friend, attending a conference at American University in preparation for the multi-state sections of the bar exam. The sessions were intensive, grueling, and, in the end, more exhausting than was actually worth the effort of the trip. This was coupled with a host of overwhelming personal problems, brought on by the wild and amoral company on whom I was dependent for transportation and lodging.

The bar exam, a three-day nightmare, is now over, as of last week. Had I even begun to conceive of the emotional ordeal that it encompassed, I would not have dreamed of even attempting it. I took the exam the first time in February, and passed half of it, which was better than the average result of most of my graduating class. I determined then that I would give my full and maximum effort to this second try, which has now culminated in a state of nervous exhaustion for me. I don't mean to be overly dramatic; I still function normally (I think), still make it to work at my menial library job each day, and otherwise move at as leisurely pace as possible. This whole traumatic experience could fill a large book, but which I could not bear to agonize over further enough to write, and I have developed a serious colitis condition, which flared up worst of all during that trip, necessitating an earlier than intended departure, preventing me from participating in the July 4 festivities.

Now that I am snuggled securely at home, I have begun to wade into the pile of things put aside, the highest priority of which was your book, Post-Portem, which you sent me earlier this year. I have just now completed reading it entirely, including the appendices. I said when I last saw you that my admiration and respect could not be higher. I was wrong: with this you have broken the thermometer. Your work deserves higher commendation than my vocabulary affords. Words fail me.

By the time you read this (when the post office gets it to you, hopefully within the next month or so), I may be an attorney at law. Which brings me to a big point I want to raise with you.

While in Washington, I did manage to make it up to the office of Senator Eastland, for a pre-arranged appointment with Mr. Bill Simpson (a native of Long Beach-- whose brother is the legislator-- and whom I got contact with through the dean of my law school). He is Eastland's committee aide, runs all his committee business, and a very affable man.

At any rate, without boring you by reiterating details of my interest that I've already written you about many times, I had a very fruitful discussion with him.

We talked about the new Senate committee being formed to re-open the JFK case. Details are still real sketchy, as reflected by press reports. But I should tell you here, before I forget, contrary to what I told you earlier, and as you'll be relieved to know, Eastland definitely will not be on this new committee. It will not be connected at all to Judiciary or any other of Eastland's. (I can already hear you saying thank goodness. Okay.) It will be a separate committee, with its own office, its own staff, and so forth. As best I understand yet, this has not happened, so I did not get too much inside dope.

Long story short, then I'll close. Mr. Simpson has what he calls a "committee of the committees". It is composed of the directors of the staffs of all the Senate committees. And Mr. Simpson will show each of them my resume, which goes into all my background with Garrison, and in radio and journalism, and my education. Then he will call me sometime the second or third week of this month, and arrange for appointments.

When I come back, I will fly up for one day only, and travel by cab only to and from my destination, instructing the taxi driver to avoid those whirlwind circles that gave me nausea. And I will stay with my aunt and uncle in Arlington, VA, who are sweet and very decent people.

I also intend to make it clear that my interest is in the Kennedy case only. I failed to stress that before. There are many worthy causes, drugs, MIAs, energy, and so forth. But this is the only issue for which I really am willing to bust a gut (which is literally necessary for me). Selfish as that may be, that's the way it is. If it doesn't work out, I'll get with my friend (that I went up with), and we'll have a nice, leisurely law practice down on the coast, suing the railroad and the gas company, and you can come down occasionally

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and help me soak up the sun on the beach.

Last time I heard from y ou, y ou were in poor health, with phlebitis, as I recall. I certainly pray you are in good condition now.

Regards to your sweet wife, whom I have met only by telephone. Maybe the two of y ou can come down here sometime? I still have my Long Peach home, although both of my grandparents are now deceased (mercifully, after both suffered too long), my ~~grandfather~~ dad is only 63 (same age as the President. as he says, not too old, right?), so they (Mom and Dad) will not be retiring there for quite a while y et.

Didn't mean to write so long, but I've missed y ou. I'll look forward to calling y ou when I am next in Washington, pretty soon, I expect. Y ou are a great friend, and I feel very close to you, but if I work on this case, although I hope we can get together often, y ou need not worry that I will impose too much on you. In fact, I hope very much that I can be an asset to you. (I appreciate th e great load you are carrying.)

Please take care of yourself, and know and be assured always of the warmth and depth of my friendship ~~for~~ and respect for y ou, even if I'm deficient in expressing it.

Sincerely yours,

Jim